

and of this city in particular, for the compliment you have paid us in selecting this Province and this city as the place of meeting for this year, and I feel I am only expressing their wishes in tendering you a hearty western welcome to our midst, and their hopes that your brief stay among us will be both pleasant and profitable to you all.

To many of you, probably to most of you, the rapid progress and general development of this young Province will come as a surprise. It does to most of our visitors from the older parts of the Dominion who know how recent has been the settlement of the West. And certainly, looking round, it does seem scarcely realizable that the site of this rapidly expanding city, of which its citizens are so justly proud, and the very spot on which this building stands, surrounded by so many comforts and refinements of modern life, was, less than two decades ago, a wild and almost impenetrable virgin forest, the haunts of the bear, the deer and the primitive savage.

It is less than a score of years by two that the incorporation of this city took place, and yet to-day it will compare favorably with many cities of the older Provinces twice and thrice its age. From the medical standpoint it is reaching after a high ideal.

The incomparable water supply which is brought in closed steel conduits from the bosom of the mountains to the north of us; the sewerage system, with its septic tanks: the paved streets, with their array of cleaners; the cement sidewalks which are now throughout the city, rapidly replacing the earlier and cruder planking; the public and private hospitals: the General Hospital, which is now being built, and which, when finished, will be the peer of any hospital of its size, all make it clear that we are endeavoring to keep abreast of the times, as well in sanitary as in other matters.

It is no idle boast, then, if I say that in the West events move rapidly. Time is no sluggard here, and we see history fashioning itself before our eyes. The whole of this great Province was in undisputed possession of savage aborigines a half century ago. The closing years of the first half of the nineteenth century saw the first real settlement made on Vancouver Island, at a place called Camosun in the native tongue, now Victoria, the capital of the Province.

A few years later, in 1858, an Act was passed in the Home Parliament to provide for the government of this new colony, thereafter to be known as British Columbia. From this date the real settlement of the Province begins. The discovery of gold in the Fraser and Cariboo soon made these districts as famous and as widely known as Sacramento or Ballarat, and a great inrush of population was the result. But a very few